There used to be a greying tower alone on the sea

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

That was before it was blown to smithereens by a terrorist of unspecified allegiance wielding a FIM-92 Stinger missile!

(Shrug) "These things happen, whatcha gonna do?", the temp from 'Voiceover Dudes For Hire' inquired nonchalantly.

"Call in Seal, that's what, you snivelling, cowardly giverupererer, you!" I scolded waving a wagging digit of disapproval.

If Days of Thunder is Top Gun on stock car wheels, what with their all-American, testosterone-fuelled, gung-ho bravado, Navy SEALs is Top Gun in a plane, a helicopter, a boat, a submarine, a crumbling, war-torn Middle Eastern city, and even a golf course.

Golfing was Bill Paxton's brainwave since he presumed the proposed touch-football scene would appear too similar to the volleyball bit in Top Gun, which once witnessed can't be

forgotten or ripped off without detection. Bill plays a sniper in Navy Seals known as 'God' and true to form has to be carried off injured towards the end. Aside from making decisions about who should die from a lofty, safe location, I suspect he's known as God to allow us to enjoy some of the movie's best black humour dialogue.

Curran: (to Dane over the radio) God, I've got company up here...

Terrorist: You're American?

Curran: God, come in God...

Terrorist: Your God does not help you now!

(Dane gets a shot off, killing the terrorist just before he dies)

Neither celluloid spiritual successor made as much impact as Tom and his F-14 Tomcat despite Navy SEALs being released during the height of the Gulf War, making it all the more relevant and enticing? Personally, I remember being sick to death of the topic at the time. No other news stories were reported until the final grain of blood-soaked sand had settled.

Mostly, people who've forced themselves to trudge through Navy SEALs remember the golf course male-bonding montage that rips off Top Gun without ripping off Top Gun quite as ostentatiously as they might have without being reined in by Paxton.

Nevertheless, it's the proceeding scene that's the highlight for me. Leading phocid, Charlie Sheen (Dale Hawkins), has his car towed away for parking on the golf course without a license to be a selfish cretin. Rather than accept responsibility for his misdemeanour, he steals a bike and peddles furiously up the highway in pursuit of the

confiscated luxury sports car. Miraculously catching up with it, Hawkins leaps onto the back of the tow truck and flings his temporary wheels into the bushes.

It's anyone's guess whether he'll clamber along the chassis to the driver's cabin and wrestle control of the wheel from the bailiff, get in the tethered car and drive off the back of the truck James Bond style, or pull off an entirely unpredictable, specialist super-secret-subterfuge manoeuvre that only a SEAL could possibly achieve.

We can believe that any of the above stunts are crazy enough for Hawkins to attempt because he's Charlie Sheen, and as we know, he's a certified nutjob. What *actually* happens is option B in case anyone cares.

After dismounting, somehow landing upright on the road, Hawkins is forced to reverse at high speed, shadowing the tow truck to avoid collision with an HGV tailing close behind. He narrowly escapes unscathed allowing the elite SEAL posse

to commence their anti-terrorist heroics. That's all they do throughout in fact, despite SEALs serving multiple functions within the Navy. Eating mackerel, singing love ballads, going clubbing, wearing trendy birth scars and so on...

This scene aside, it's safe to half-watch the first hour of the movie while you do something more useful. Like, write an article all about Navy SEALs and Ocean's multi-platform gaming accompaniment. Sorry, bad example. I said *useful*.

Well, "I've started, so I'll finish". With a bit of help from Magnus Magnusson and the manual...

> "SEALS - Sea, Air, Land. They are the men of the US Navy's counter-insurgency, special forces. Used in the perilous waterways of Vietnam, Panama, the rescue of American citizens in Grenada and the recent action in the Gulf, the US Navy SEALS have two new missions - certainly their most dangerous to date."

Navy SEALs was produced by Orion Studios, which isn't intrinsically interesting, except to note that Ocean had amicable history with them. They'd previously been awarded the contracts to convert First Blood (1982), Platoon (1986), and RoboCop (1987), and would subsequently go on to deliver the platforming interpretation of Addams Family (1991).

Once called upon to fly to Beirut with a view to destroying a stash of (finally traced) Stinger missiles, the pace steps up a gear, which should have raised the hopes of anyone who'd paid to see buildings, people and vehicles explode in a shower of shrapnel, blood, and probably vomit. Michael Biehn wasn't among them; he was on the *other* side of the screen playing one of the leading stars, Lieutenant James Curran, nonetheless wasn't exactly enamoured by the movie either. "Probably the worst experience of my life" is the way he described it, which likely relates to the time Navy SEALs' cast spent in boot camp training in preparation for their roles. It was pretty gruelling by all accounts having been planned by real hardcase SEALs.

A number of authentic military personnel were involved in the production generally, so Navy SEALs *should* have been bulletproof in the accuracy stakes. Other former SEALs now laugh at the preposterous nonsense that made the cut so artistic license must have counteracted any diligent research conducted by professionals.

Normally some semblance of character development could be expected to present, yet depth isn't Navy SEALs' forte. We get to know Charlie best, and then wish we *hadn't* since he's thoroughly unlikeable with few redeeming qualities. A serial womaniser, backstabber, liar, renegade liability, danger to his colleagues, embarrassment to his superiors etc. He shares a lot in common with Martin Riggs of Lethal Weapon fame, only without the charm and underlying moral decency that allows us to root for him.

Claire: What are we doing here?

Hawkins: Well hopefully each other if all goes as planned.

Claire, I should point out is Curran's potential love interest played by Joanne Whalley (aka Sorsha from Willow). Here she's memorably petrified witless by a staged target practice shootout stunt courtesy of Curran... who's supposed to be the sensitive one! What? I thought she'd be impressed... well, maybe after she's resuscitated and fitted with a hearing aid to correct the permanent eardrum damage.

Hawkins tricks his commanding officer into leaving their first date together (at a swanky restaurant) early so he can muscle in. This is Hawkins' concept of romancing her. What's the phrase? Who needs enemies when you've got friends like

this?
Romance for Dummies lesson 2: find someone you'd like to get to know better and crudely insult their ancestry.

Appropriately Hawkins is a Maverick who operates on his own terms, disobeying orders from superiors to chase "the rush" and bolster his own ego. All well and good whilst he's nailing terrorists (and posing in front of the mirror), not such a welcome trait when his arrogance results in the death of colleagues. William 'Billy' Graham, for instance, played by Dennis Haysbert (President David Palmer from 24).

Ignoring a specific order to stay in the safety of the shadows and hold fire, Hawkins wades into a stakeout incident guns blazing, giving away their position to a patrol of Israeli militiamen who return fire before perishing themselves. Hawkins gets on board with official protocol... *after* the damage is done. If saluting counts.

It's at this point we begin to see the tragic, albeit inevitable, consequences of the SEALs' chosen career path, and wonder if it's worth tuning back in to see how the poignant drama evolves. Reminiscent of Goose's death in Top Gun, Graham checking out prematurely is a pivotal moment for Hawkins as well as the audience.

> Curran: Why'd you leave the doorway? Were you looking for a rush, a little rush? Well, I hope you got it. Because you just toasted a man you put in his grave.

Graham had attempted to get married to his beloved fiance, Jolena, before being summoned mid-ceremony to attend to his military duties. Prior to that caught up in an internal quarrel concerning with whom his loyalties should lie. Hawkins' failure to honour the chain of command making the polemic decision for him, he forevermore carries the burden of guilt in the knowledge that Graham's mother - with the bugler's Taps still ringing in her ears - is in possession of a folded US flag thanks to him. A military funeral - keepsake trinkets or not - isn't much compensation for a lifetime's loyal service.

> (Curran and Hawkins are arguing over Graham's death)
>
> Hawkins: ALL RIGHT! I did it. I F**KED UP! I f**ked up and he is GONE! And there isn't a damn thing I can do about it! So what the hell do you want from me, HUH!
>
> (Curran walks away without answering)

Everything else that occurs surrounding the more meaningful scenes entails blowing things up with heavy artillery or *planning* to blow things up with heavy artillery. That said, it *does* occasionally serve a useful purpose. Rescuing hostages for example.

Pilot: Lieutenant, you guys are incredible. Thank you.

Curran: There's no reason to thank us because we don't exist. You never saw us. This never happened.

Hawkins: One more thing: you're welcome.

Notwithstanding the relatively low ($21m) production budget, towards the end there's a substantial array of weaponry and vehicles on display, the pyrotechnics and stunt division working overtime to keep up with direction. If you're into no-brainer action flicks, Navy SEALs measures up reasonably well, not dating too shabbily. Having raised a meagre $25.1m at the box office, I gather the movie-going public were expecting more. Arnie or Sly maybe? Charlie works as an action (anti)hero regardless. I couldn't fault his performance in Platoon, and a lack of superhuman muscle isn't critical.

What's difficult to dismiss is the apparent incompetence of these supposedly world-class soldiers, one stupid, irrational decision after another instigating the death of more colleagues. Again, only half-watching as the seemingly stuck clock ticked down through the inordinately prolonged 113-minute runtime, it appeared that more SEALs died than had actually embarked on the mission. That could be a lack of continuity in my attention span rather than with the movie. I think I already said that, I wasn't paying attention.

Most ludicrous is the final getaway sequence. Following a frenetic APC chase through the congested backstreets of Beirut, the surviving SEALs flee to the beach and head out to sea without a boat or life-jackets.

Leary: They won't f**k with us in the water!

They're immediately shot at with rifles and then a rocket launcher, proving their dubious survival technique theory resolutely incorrect. Stranded in the ocean with nowhere left to swim, the guerillas continue their dogged pursuit in a stolen civilian fishing trawler. Somehow all but one SEAL manages to dodge and weave around the relentless hail of bullets, breathing underwater with no SCUBA gear.

Ben Shaheed, he's the chief baddie. I probably should have mentioned that sooner. Shaheed coasts up to the unlucky SEAL who bit the bullet (and is now floating motionless face down) to drag him aboard just as Hawkins pounces out of the deep blue armed with a still-fully-functioning pistol. If any of the forces come equipped with waterproof guns, you can guarantee it would be the SEALs.

Hawkins drags a rebel soldier overboard and a volley of gunfire ensues, causing the trawler to disintegrate amidst ashen plumes of scorched fibreglass. Underwater the skirmish continues as the aquatic wrestlers gasp for breath (or w*ould* be doing if they weren't super-human). Hawkins eventually slits his assailant's throat with a machete, yet there's not the merest squirt of blood, the seawater remaining clear and undisturbed. Bit of an oversight there! And a blood squib would have been so cheap and simple to fit.

Then what's left of the crew is rescued by a supporting Navy submarine (whose commander was moments ago being harangued into turning back to head home without them) and they live happily ever after. That has to have been the plan all along, the only other explanation, they've gone barking-cuckoo-crazy assuming they can paddle back to the US across 6,611 miles of the Atlantic Ocean.

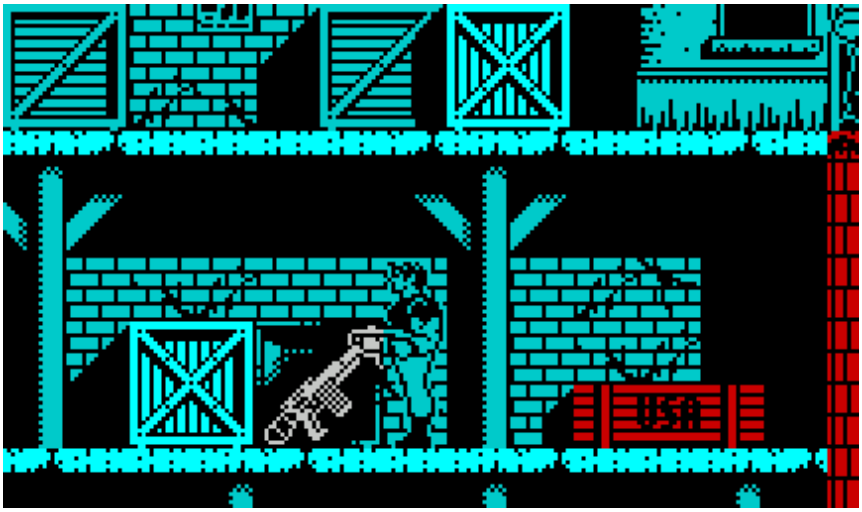
Hawkins: How long you guys wanna wait?

Most of the movie's mission briefs were dropped when it came to translating the events to pixels, resulting in a platformer revolving around planting a predetermined number of bombs on top of crates containing deadly Stinger missiles. Conveniently draped in American flags for easy identification purposes! The suggestion being that Uncle Sam supplied them in the first place. A common allegation during the Middle Eastern 'troubles'. What we can say unequivocally is that Stinger missiles were first designed and built in the US.

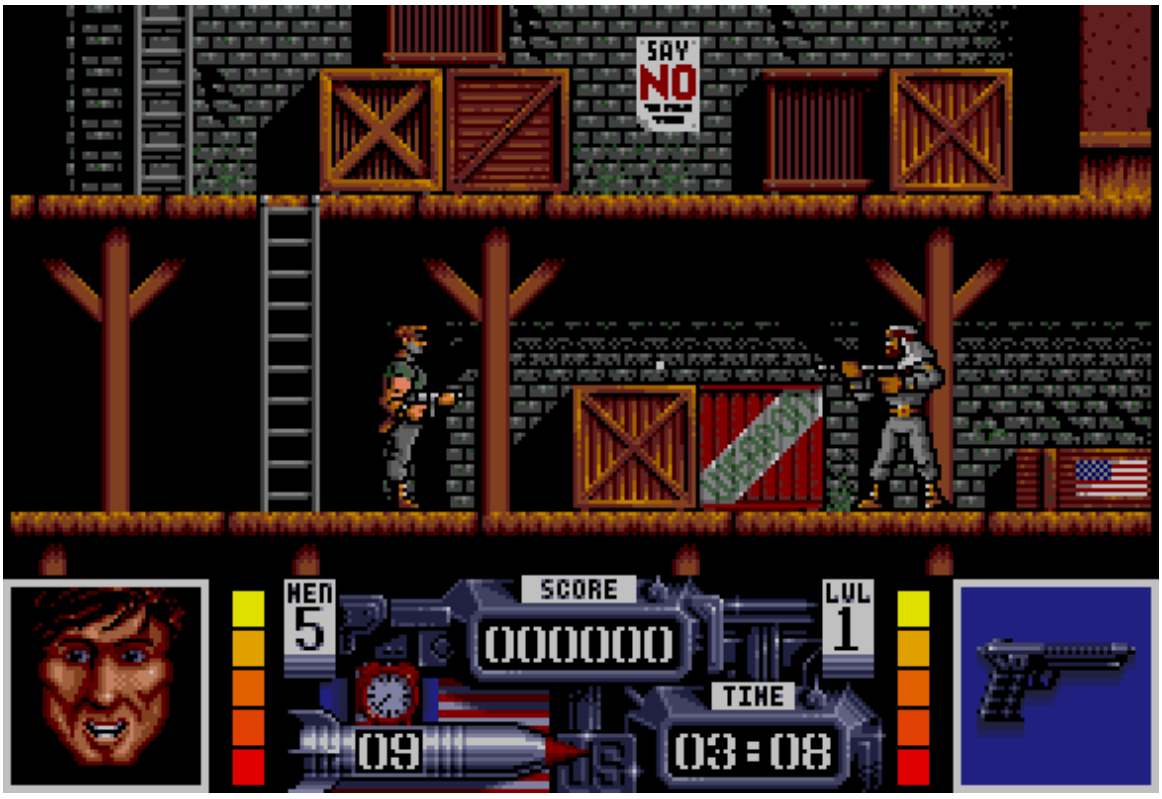
These sometimes elusive crates can be located anywhere up to the far reaches of each level, forcing the team to explore every last nook and cranny before being allowed to continue. This and the insane difficulty curve, exacerbated by an unforgiving time limit, artificially extend an exercise that would otherwise be over in ten minutes. A ninja gamer can still beat it in 25 minutes, though I'm sure these longplayers are cybernetically enhanced aliens who can survive without eating, sleeping or blinking, so aren't much use as a yardstick for comparisons with us ordinary humans.

We play as five members of the squad, each serving as one life. All have a unique avatar that grimaces and groans with pain the more suffering they endure until expiring and the baton is handed to the next cannon fodder fool. Not that you'll have long to appreciate the intricate changes; absorb one bullet and you're a goner. Well, that's certainly one way to effectively engender a tense ambience.

Aside from the default pistol, three limited-ammo weapon types are at our disposal, acquired by smashing open wooden crates with whatever weapon we already have to hand.

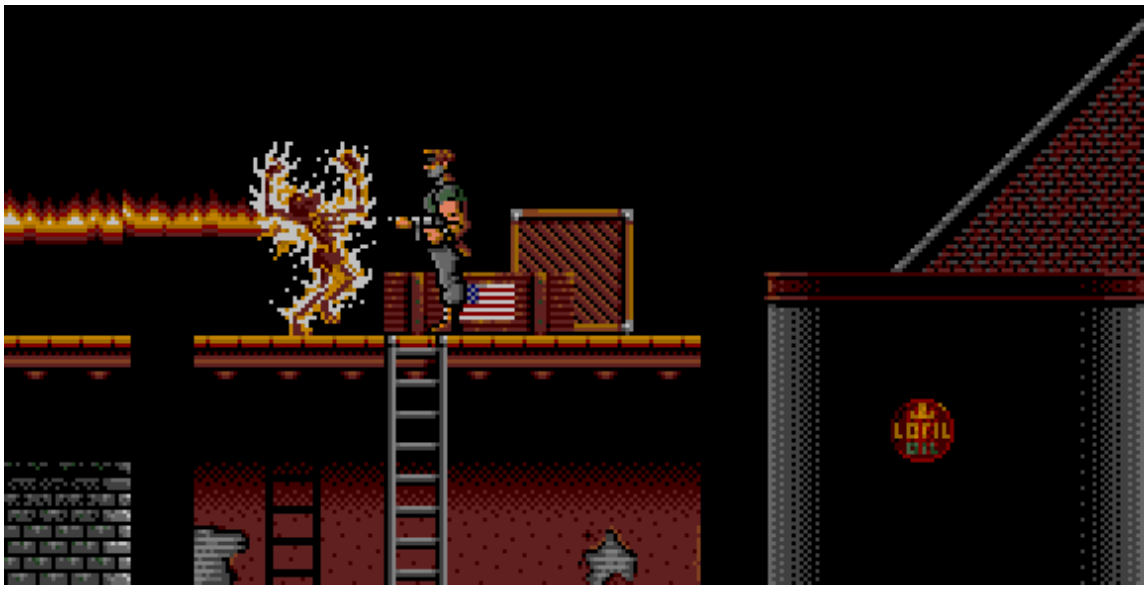


A crowbar might have been safer! Rodney, you plonker! Then again, we see a mixture of grenades and a crowbar employed in the movie to reveal the contents of crates. Hawkins, you plonker!



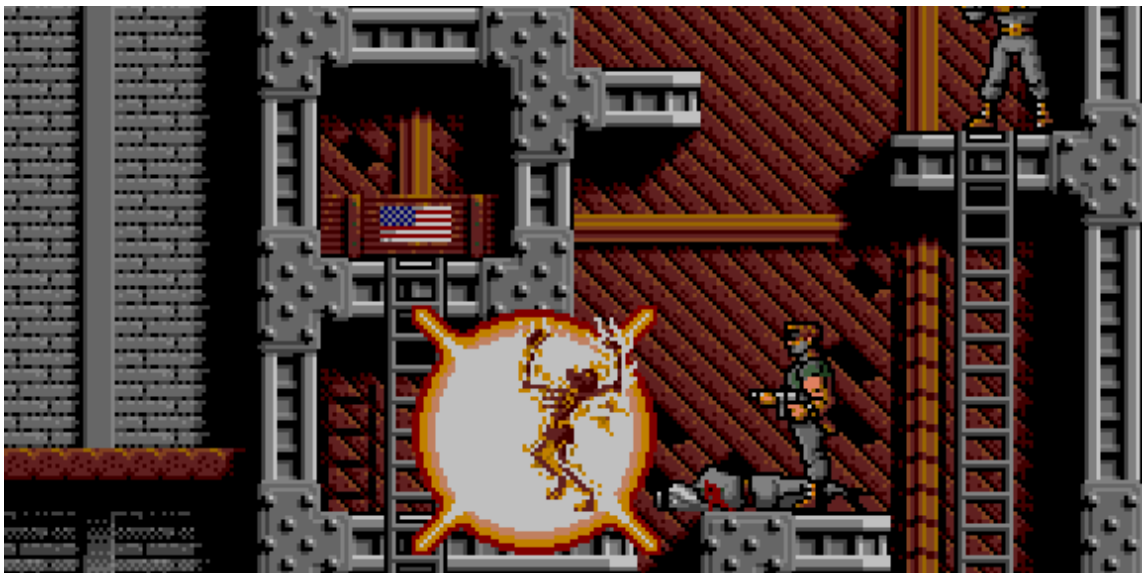
Oh well, we're here to risk life and flipper so it's par for the course. On the menu is an M-16 assault rifle, flamethrower,

and rocket launcher.



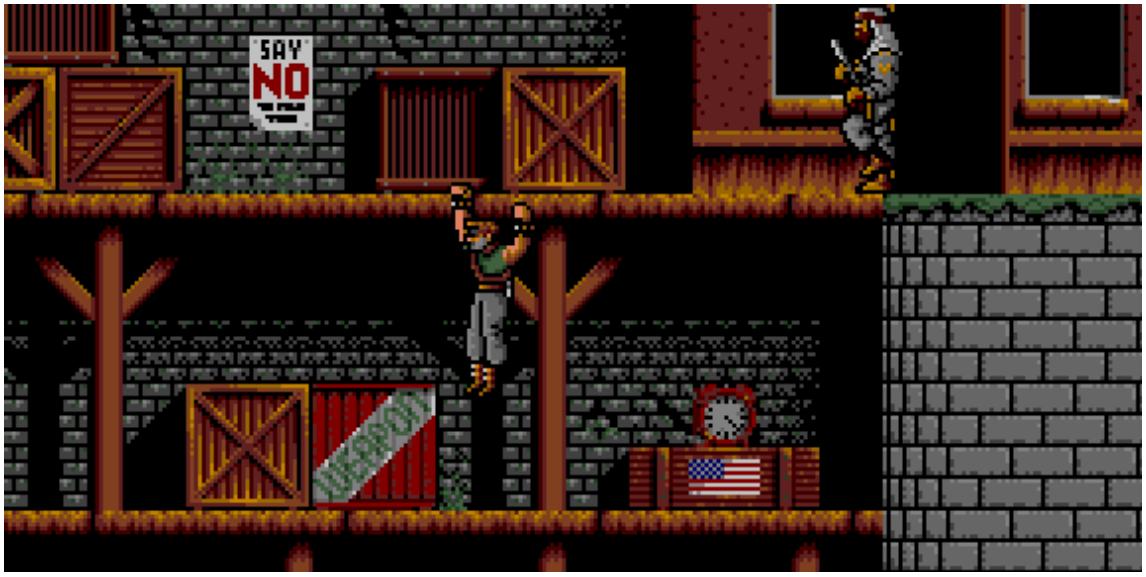
Use them wisely. Their ephemeral nature obliges us to adopt an alternative strategy to switching on autofire and running to the finish line like a banshee. Enemy forces won't attack until we are in sight so it's possible to manoeuvre around them carefully, blasting selectively once they are marginally visible before they have chance to react. They can't detect us if they're facing away so that's the perfect moment to strike. Shooting a well-timed bullet towards an off-screen baddie, then following it to watch the satisfying, undefendable impact is another fun way to get the upper hand.

Owing to the violent nature of the game, in April 1992 Navy SEALs was added to the German blah blah blah BPjM index of blah blah blah. Clueless Muppets. Absolutely pointless. Yawn. Let's move on.



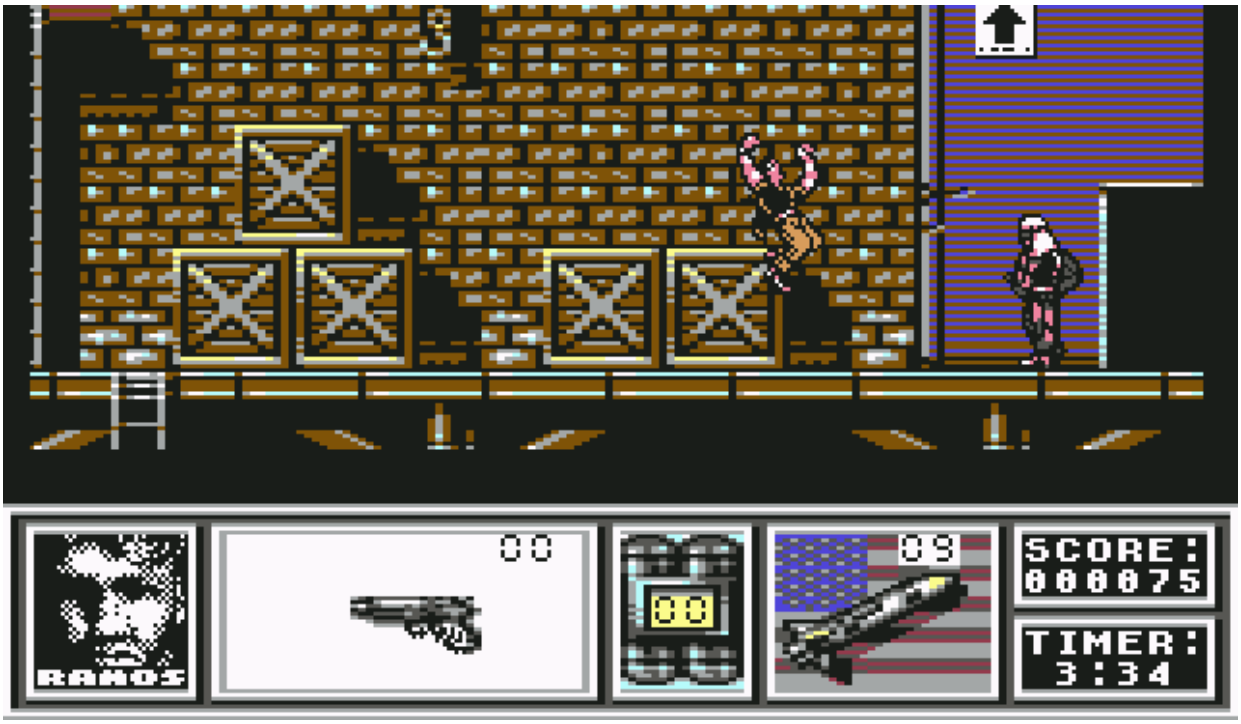
"Bombs, guns, it's got the lot. Navy SEALs has more variety than the London Palladium and gets our seal of ultimate brilliance. An SU Gold!"

Sinclair User (92%, March 1991)

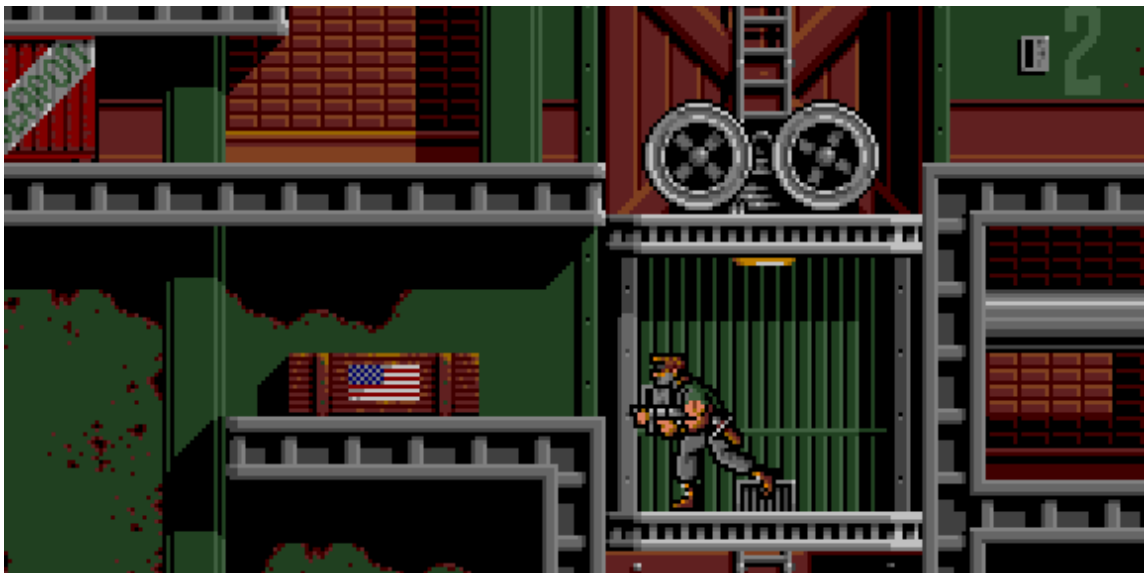


Another option is to surprise baddies from beneath, rapidly swinging upwards like an Olympic acrobat to dislodge them from their perch without a single shot being fired. That's military precision for you, austerity style! Once dead they won't respawn so that's a relief. They even remain where

they were slain in pain, possibly by Dane. A permanent reminder of our proficiency.

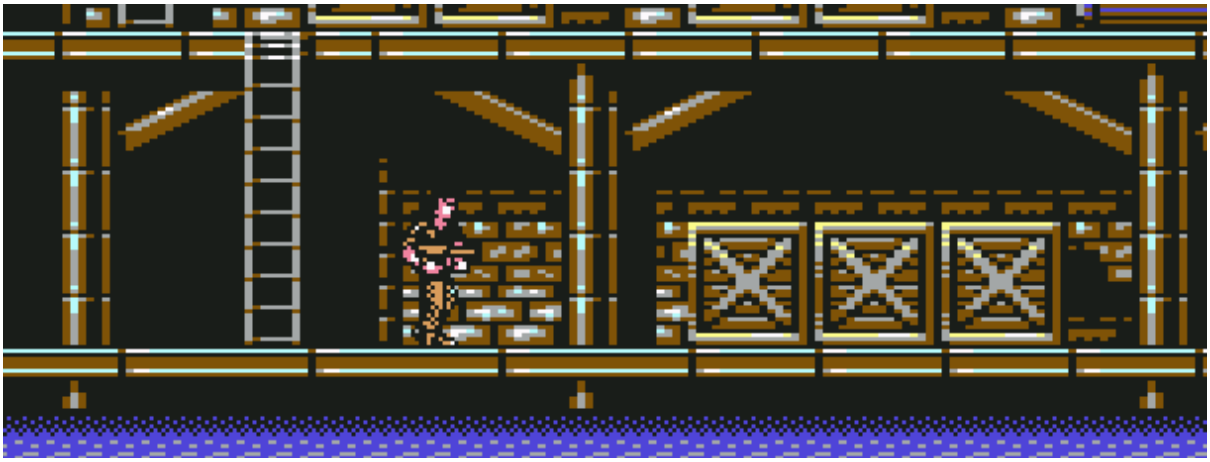


Crates can further be used as a springboard to elevate us to higher ground. In contrast to the C64 version (aside from the weapon cache varieties), these aren't destructible, so we don't have to worry about cutting off our only route to freedom.



On level two only the lift can transport us to the multiple upper storeys. Unfortunately, it takes an eternity to arrive, wasting our valuable rationed seconds. Miss it and the mission could be a write-off. In fact, *hit* it and the same is true - it's possible to die as a result of being crushed beneath it, or by landing on top as it ascends. Call yourselves SEALs? You wouldn't get a job at Flamingo Land balancing beach balls on the tip of your bayonets.

> "If there was a bit more variety in the mission objectives, or it had a sub-game or something, then Navy Seals would be an absolute stonker. As it stands, it only manages very good!"
>
> **Commodore Format (81%, January 1991)**

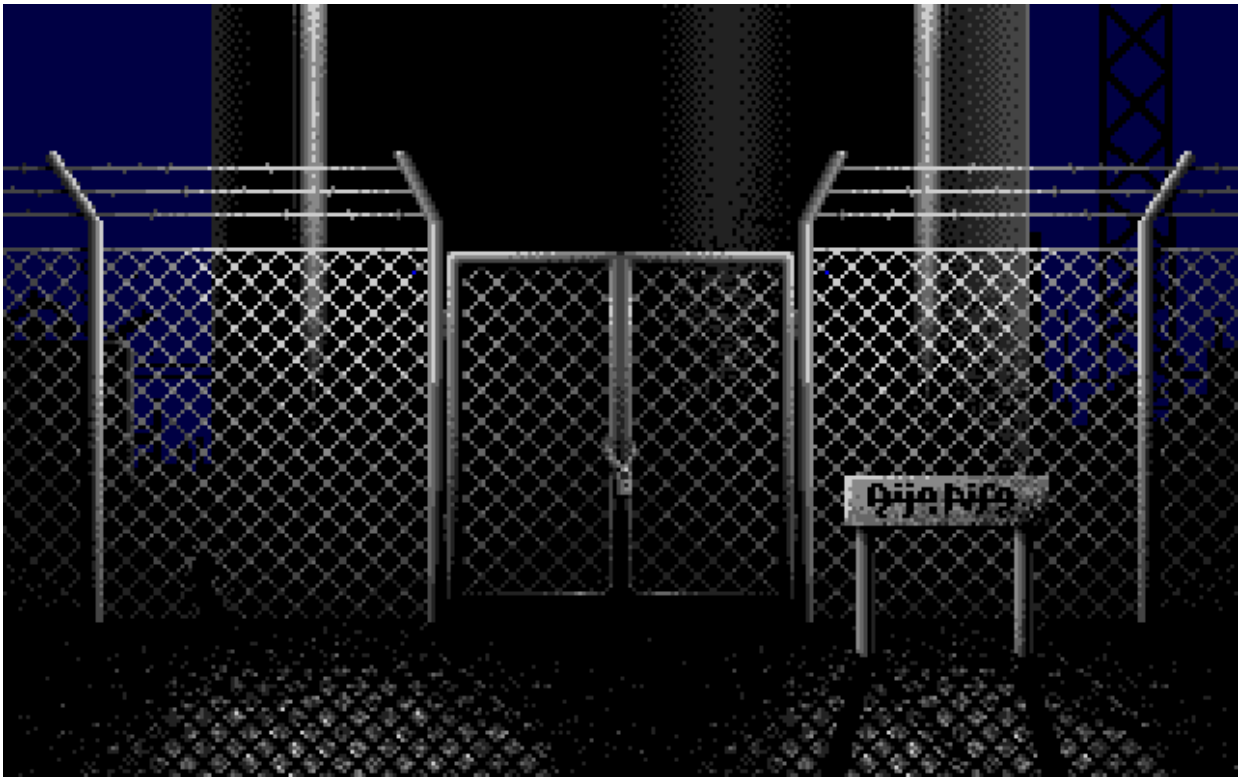


An attempt is made to tie each of the eight levels (split across two core missions) to a specific movie scene by way of manual narrative and cutscene mini animations, though ultimately they all feel interchangeable. Well, they *would*; each mission objective remains identical, as do the threats encountered.

From the manual...

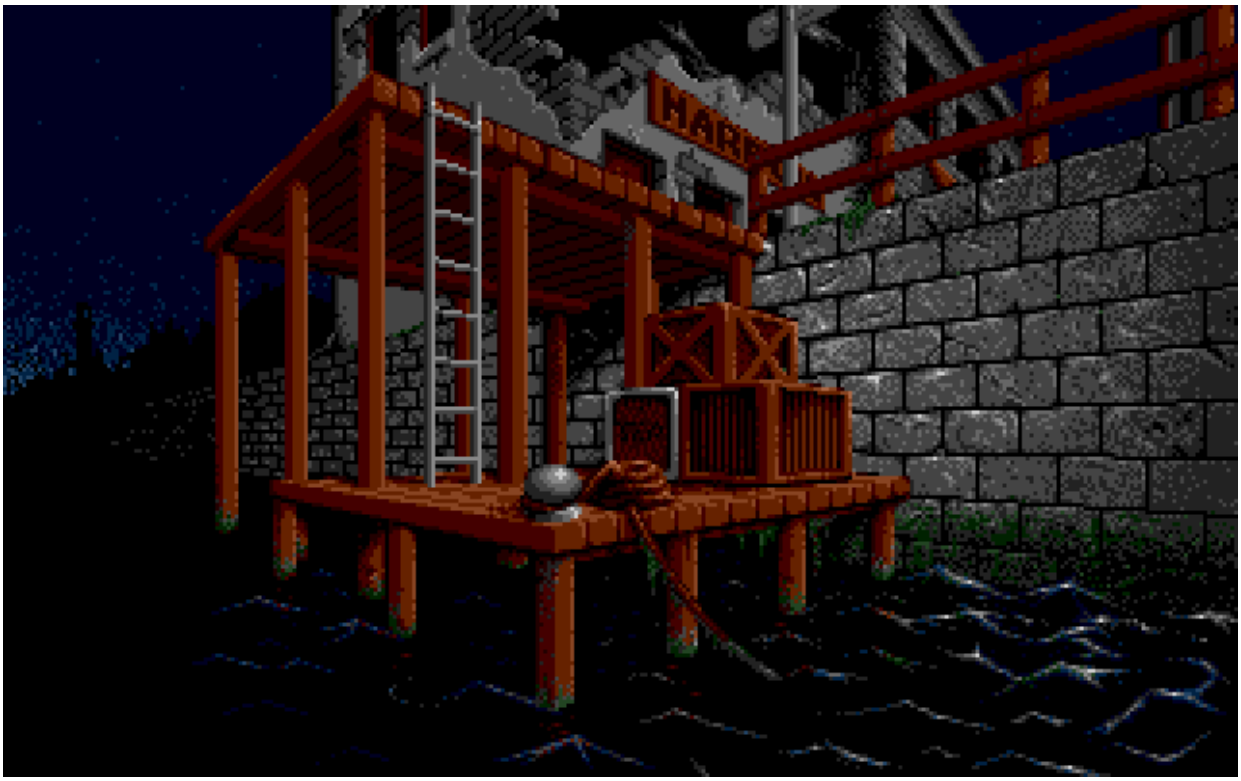
Mission one

The Gulf of Oman - and a secret location welcomes the arrival of the elite SEAL team. Their objective? To rescue the crew of a recently shot down helicopter.



Mission two

Beirut - a dangerous stockpile of missiles must be destroyed before terrorists have a chance to use them. Only the SEAL team have the capability to complete the mission. You control the team. You control the action. You hold the fate of innocent lives in your hands.



Level one: the harbour

You come ashore at the terrorist base. Plant detonators at each Stinger missile avoiding guards or killing them where necessary.

Level two: the communications tower

After the tower has been secured all terrorist communication links will be severed and enemy reinforcements will not be summoned. You must then escape underground to the barracks.

Level three & four: the barracks

Storm the barracks and remove any resistance.

Level five: rescue the hostage

Plant detonators on all Stinger missiles, make your way to the prison where the pilot is being held and then make your escape.

Level six: the escape

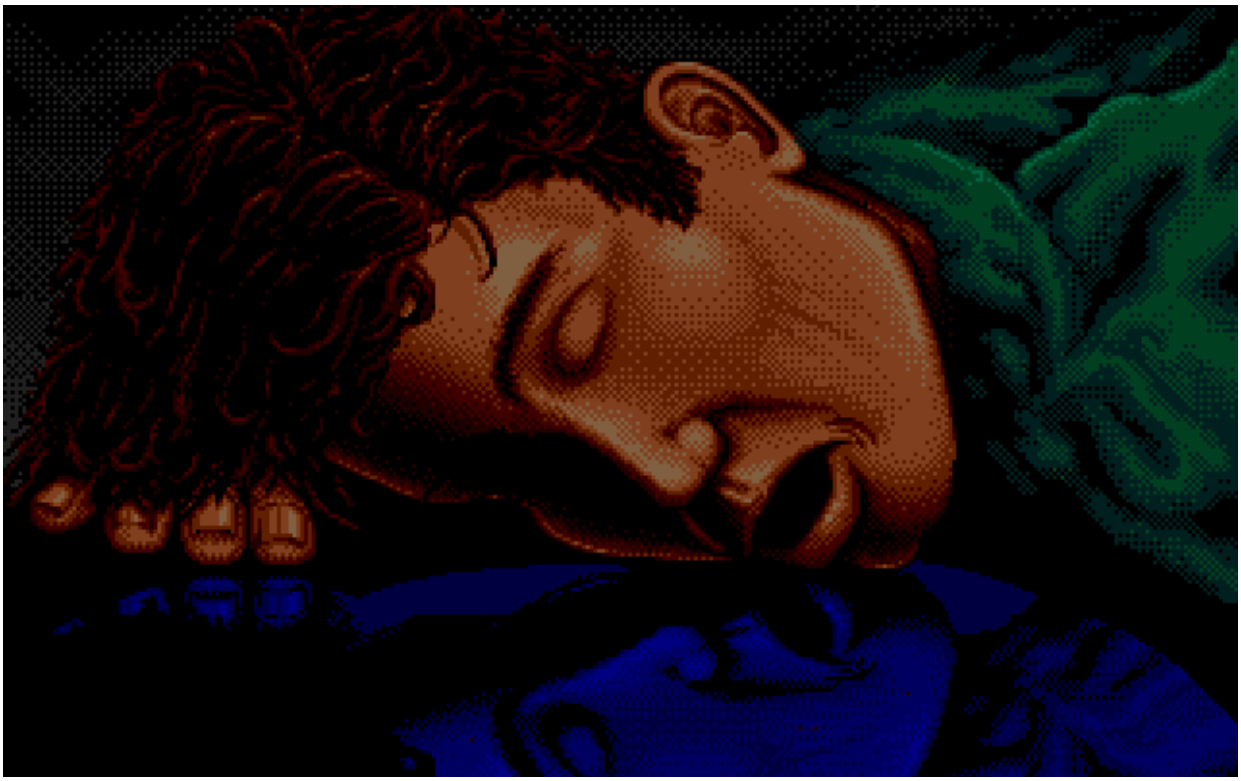
Escape the base as quickly as possible or you will miss the rendezvous with the US helicopter.

Level seven & eight: mission two

Make your way through the streets of Beirut avoiding enemy fire. When you reach the Stinger missile stockpile - destroy them.

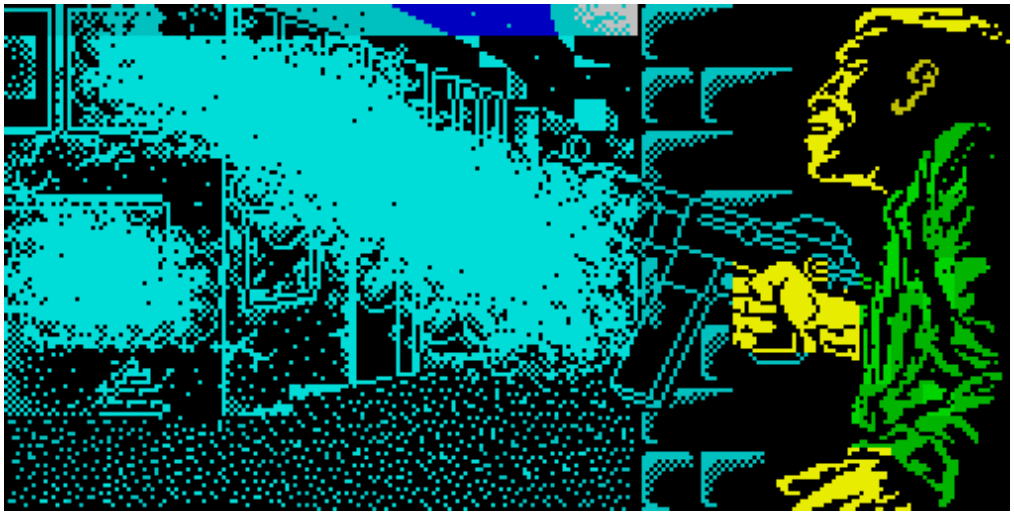
Our thanks for plodding through all forty screens (according to CU Amiga) is a black and white text congratulations message. That sounds a bit low to me.

Anyway, I'm just glad I didn't persevere to reach the end legitimately. Without a trainer I'd be face down in the dirt with Graham, suffocating in a puddle born of my own blood.



An animated sequence/static image composition constitutes the Spectrum wrap-up debrief, putting the Amiga's finale to shame.

Another victory for
Truth, Justice and the
American Way.

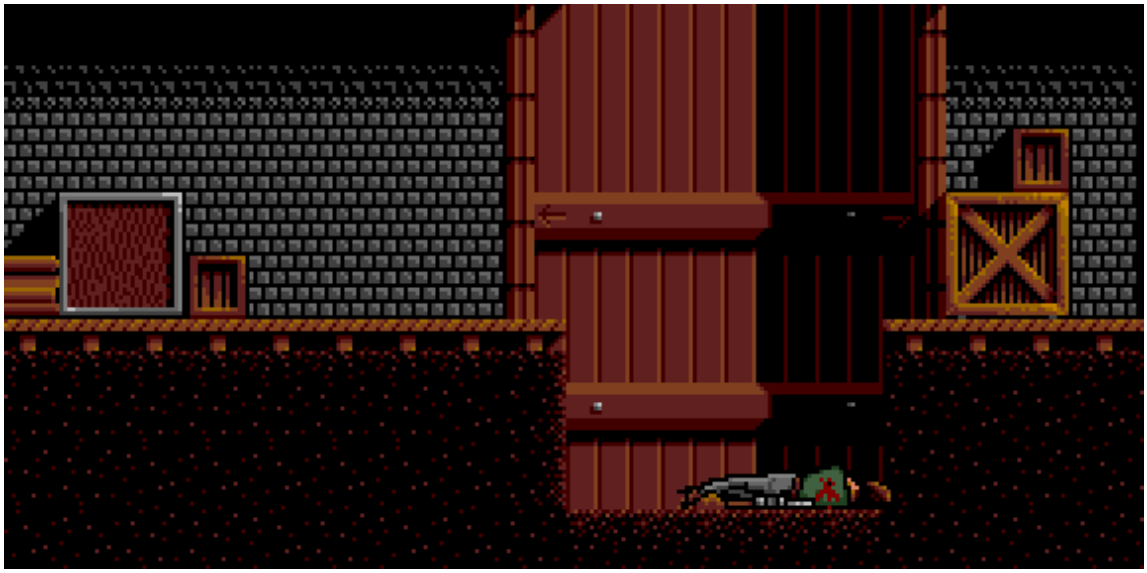


"It's difficult to find the words to describe Navy SEALS - although I suppose 'rubbish', 'abysmal' and 'blooargh' would fit the bill. It's so frustrating to play; the controls themselves are unresponsive, but even worse, the main character runs so close to the edge of the screen that he all too often runs straight into a terrorist and is gunned down without even being given the chance to duck!

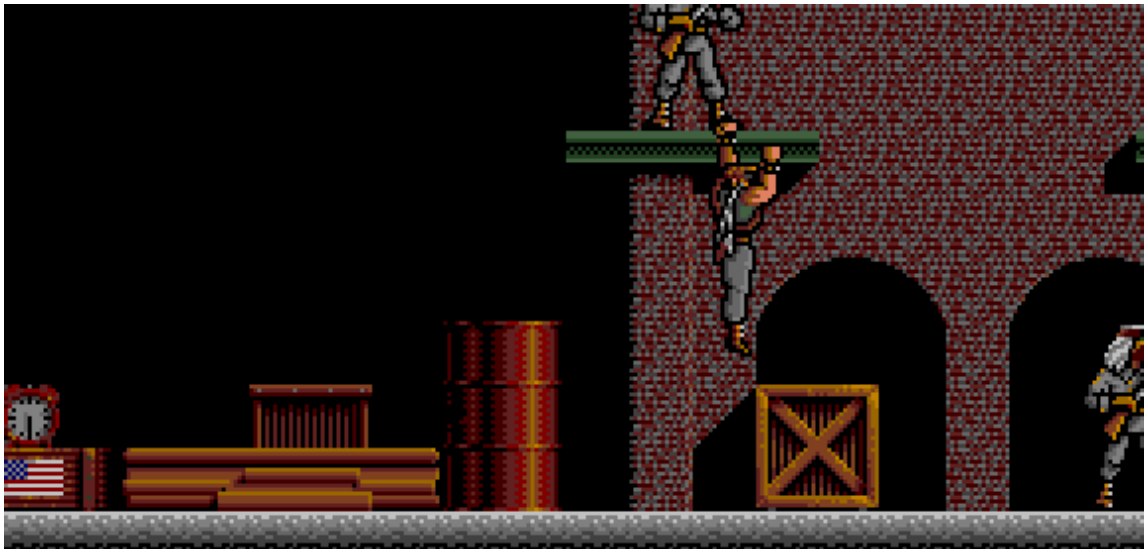
About the only good point in the entire product is the animation of your soldier, but that's one healthy point in an otherwise terminally ill piece of software."

Computer and Video Games (45%, Amiga, September 1991)

Graphics are proficiently drawn without being breathtaking, reminiscent of other Ocean licensed movie platformers such as Total Recall and Untouchables (level one anyway). It's the animation that stands out, particularly when depicting our assigned SEAL somersaulting up to an elevated platform, or monkey-barring his way across a gaping void that would otherwise see him fall to his doom. Yes, no-one likes fall damage.



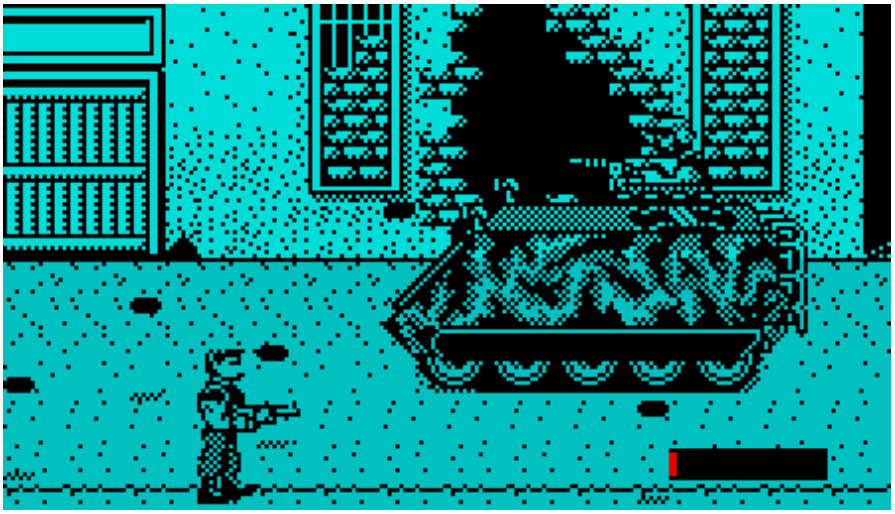
They even get tired and drop off ledges if you leave them hanging around for too long. Stupid realism, it'll be the death of me. ;)

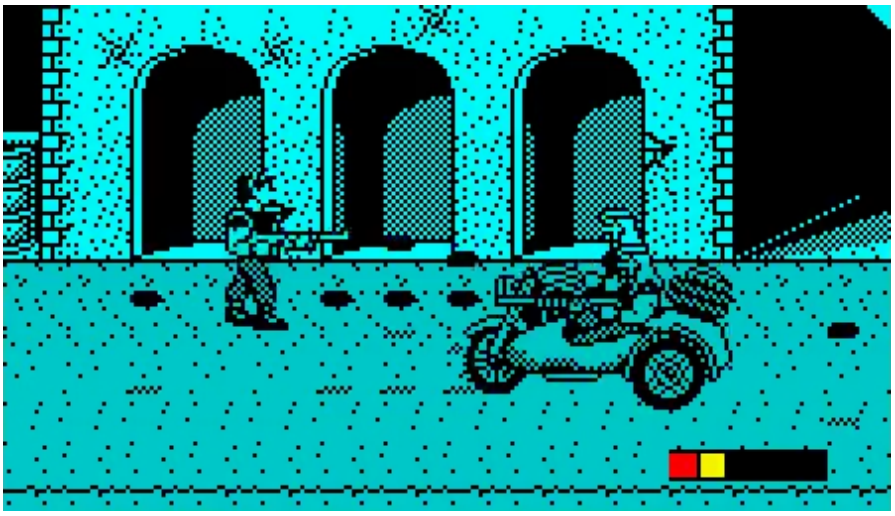


To make all this possible on the Spectrum it was designed as an exclusive 128k release, sidelining the less capable 48k system. Even then Navy SEALs had to be a multi-load arrangement due to memory constraints. It's actually more impressive than the Amiga version in some respects, blending two gameplay styles, one of which allows the player to explore multiple planes of terrain. Plenty of annotated

interstitial stills are presented at appropriate moments to advance the plot, somehow leaving a few bytes of memory spare to even include a Space Invaders mini-game!

Moreover, the second mission introduces interaction with some hefty vehicular sprites such as a jeep, tank and motorbike as featured on the silver screen.

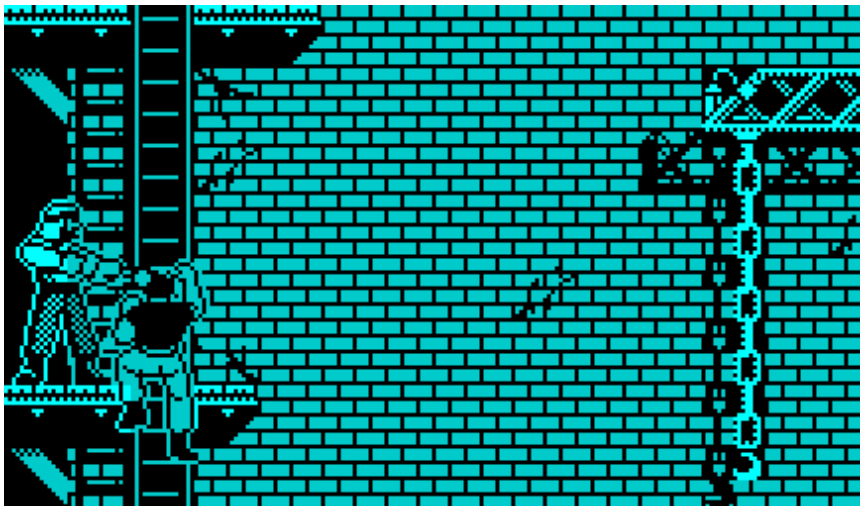




"Graphics are very colourful, detailed but always clear, and colour is effectively used throughout level one. Animation of the characters is simply brilliant, the SEALs and Arabs perform all their movements well and surprisingly quickly considering their huge size!

Mission two is the more immediately playable of the two but in the end, it's mission one's five complex levels that'll keep you enthralled!" - Richard

"Oozing quality, Navy SEALs is one of the most well designed, programmed and produced products of the year. It's tough to begin with, but make a map, plan your movements and you'll be well away.



Graphics are superb and there are loads of really neat touches to the animation in mission one: the scenery normally scrolls smoothly around you, but when you climb a ladder it scrolls in chunky steps with every rung you climb, and there's the devastating missile launcher weapon - fire that and the whole screen is clouded in a red and yellow explosion!

Navy SEALs is excellent value too, you really are getting two very different games: the strategic mission one and the very playable stroll down Hell highway in mission two. In fact, it's a bit of a landmark in Speccy gaming!" - Oli

Crash (94%, issue 84, January 1991)

In Your Sinclair's 'mega preview' (December 1990) programmer, James Higgins, revealed that they begin working on the game well before seeing the movie so that explains why there's so little to join the dots. That aside, he thought the movie was cobblers, diplomatically clueing in the readers without actually saying a word.

> **YS:** So, James, what interesting things can you tell me about the making of Navy SEALs then? Have you seen the film yet?
>
> **James:** Erm, yes, we saw it a few months ago, but we were already well into the game by then.
>
> **YS:** And is it any good?
>
> **James:** Well, er, um, it's... (getting all embarrassed at this point)
>
> **YS:** You mean it's crap?

James: I didn't say that! (suddenly realising he could be in trouble from the powers that be at Ocean). But, well, um...

YS: Okay, moving swiftly on, how come the two parts of this game are so different?

James: (acting a bit relieved now) What happened was we did the second part of the game right at the beginning when we thought we were producing a 48k jobbie, but half-way through the project Ocean's policy changed - they wouldn't be doing any more 48k games from now on, only 128k. That meant we could be a lot more ambitious with the other section, and anyway, we were getting a bit bored with the way the game was going. This running-about-shooting-things stuff was okay for one level, but would get a bit tedious if we did it all like that.

YS: It's just like Renegade with guns isn't it?

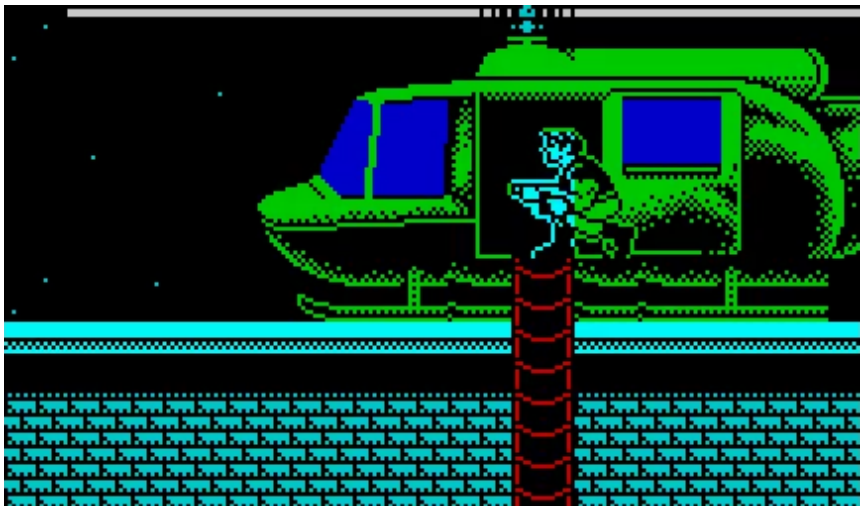
James: Yeah, more or less. So, then we went into doing the second section (the one that appears first in the game) and we kept thinking "wouldn't it be neat if...?" sort of thoughts. Like wouldn't it be neat if when you killed someone, they didn't just disappear but fell down and lay dead on the floor?

Then when you retraced your steps or died and got sent back someways in the game you'd find yourself walking through all these dead bodies. We don't think it's been done before.

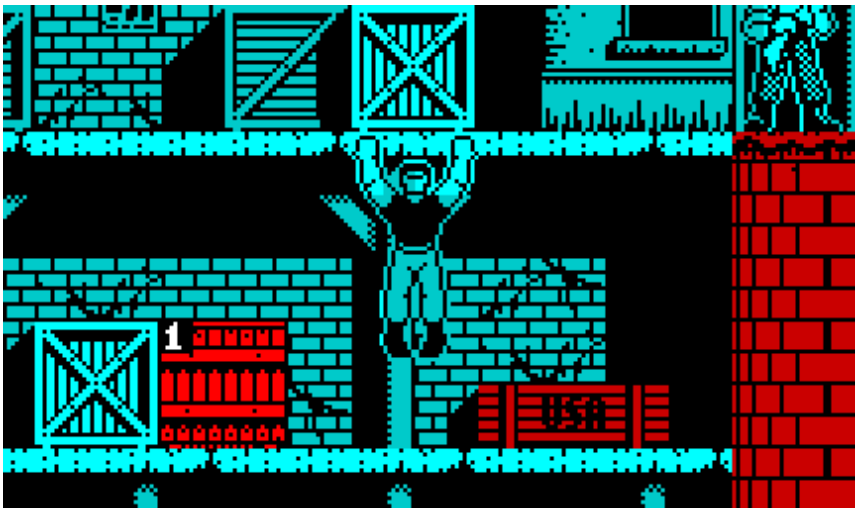
Another one was, "why should you have an energy system in a game?" Shouldn't it just be one hit and you're dead, like in real life? And wouldn't it be nice if you could sneak up on the baddies, so that if they're not looking directly at you, they don't know you're there until it's too late? That sort of thing.

YS: Excellent. Any major problems you came across with the game then?

James: Well, I'm not used to having to move colour around on the Speccy, so it took a bit of an effort working that out, especially with the big things like the truck, helicopter and the lift.



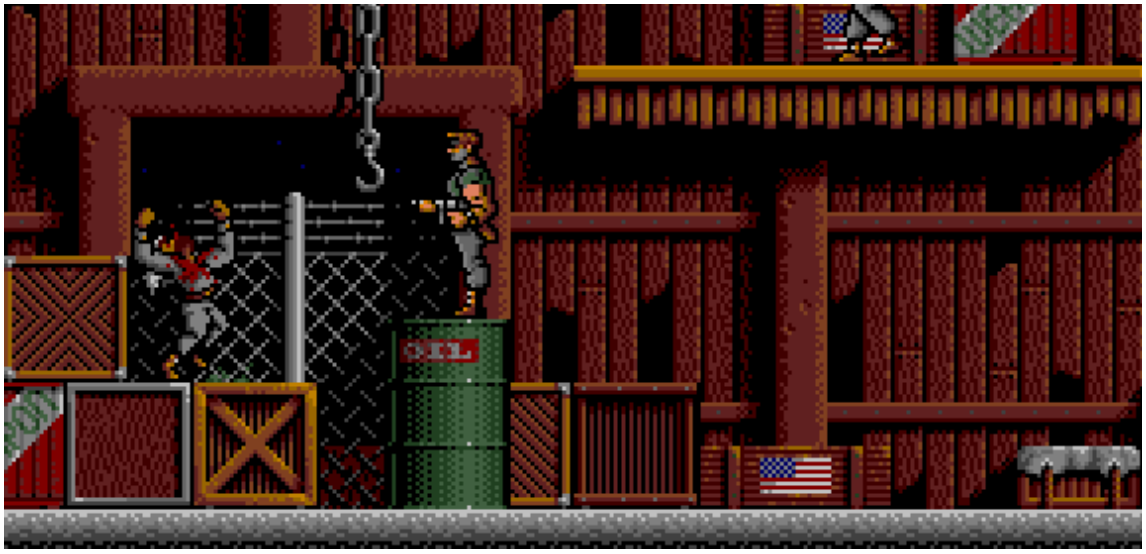
That wasn't any major problem though - probably the worst thing was the amount of memory moving the little SEAL sprite around took up. He's quite big and can make lots of moves, so that turned out to be a bit of a prob.



Fun fact: James also coded the Atari ST port, but not the Amiga version. That was John Meegan and Bobby Earl. Graphics by Warren Lancashire, Simon Butler and Martin McDonald. Music by Matthew Cannon. Sound effects by Jonathan Dunn.

"A long-awaited game (presumably because it's been held over to tie in with the release of the by-all-accounts-

> awful movie), but now it's finally out you tend to wonder why they bothered. Playable, but extremely average in most respects."
>
> **Amiga Power (61%, August 1991)**



In the US the movie was released in July 1990, yet it wasn't until June 1991 that it arrived in UK cinemas. CU Amiga published the first review of the game during the same month so Ocean were right on target in terms of timing.

> Hawkins: Leary, you got that missile. You might wanna think about using it.
>
> Leary: I would if I could figure the damn thing out.
>
> Rexer: It's a one-shot deal.
>
> Leary: What?
>
> Hawkins: You miss, we die.

Sound effects are convincingly robust and would be fine had every footstep and ascension of each ladder rung not been underscored by a grating thud or clank. In-game music might

have helped to engender a perilous atmosphere. Silence is what we actually got in all areas except for the resplendent, shimmering title screen.

"Firstly, and foremost, the gameplay is so bleeding hard, it'll have you pulling your hair out within minutes! The terrorists are so fast and accurate with their guns that the only way to beat most of them is to remember where each one is from the game before, then find a safe position before they actually appear on screen.

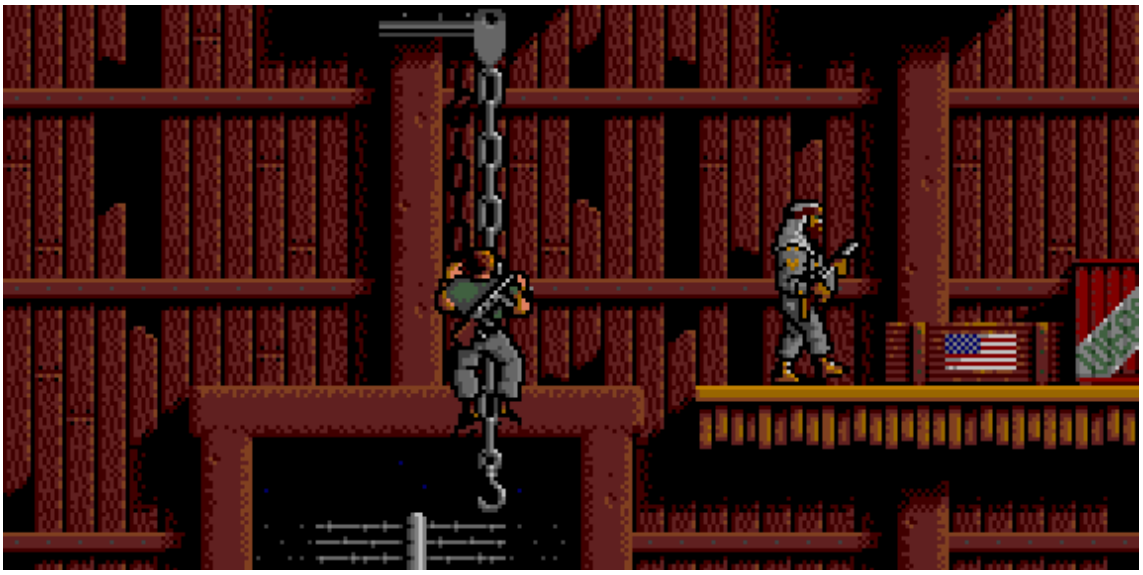
Your SEAL is also annoyingly prone during all the animated jumping-on-crates bits, and even when he's climbing a ladder he's a sitting duck and is easily shot down. The colourful and detailed graphics are SEALs' greatest assets, but as I've already mentioned, the animation on the player's sprite, though very realistic, gets in the way of the gameplay. Recommended only to

very patient players (or for those with superhuman game-playing abilities)."

Computer and Video Games (75%, Amstrad CPC, February 1991)

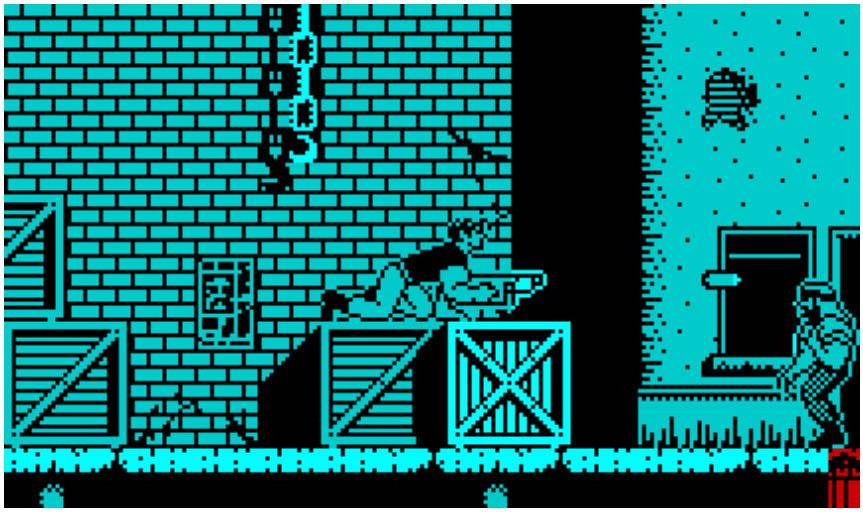
Unreliable controls, however, are more of a bind. Our men leap with a fixed arc so it's a matter of all or nothing, often causing us to over or undershoot our intended target.

Sometimes we'll pass right through the edge of a platform, struggle to extricate ourselves from a ladder or chain, or become detached without pushing in any direction other than up.



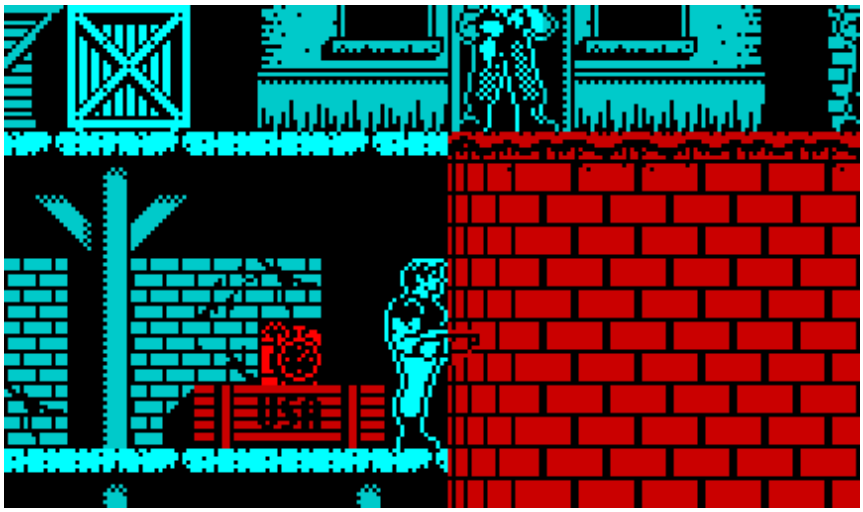
Platform grabbing/clambering upwards Prince of Persia style is awesome whenever it works, which is most of the time when approaching from beneath. It's fantastic that this is a feature at all - how many notorious pixel-perfect platformers would have benefited from this?

Occasionally we're given the impression a floor can't be passed through... until trying to swing up or drop down for the tenth time. Then we strike it lucky with no logical explanation. I almost gave up at one point assuming I'd been caught in a gotcha snare. You know the kind, where if you don't carry out actions or visit areas in a particular sequence you get stuck?



"Huurgh! The Spectrum game is a monochromatic version of the GX4000 one, except this is even less playable, because the main sprite has an annoying tendency to get stuck in silly places, leaving you wide open for a bullet in the bonce! Again, a very disappointing license, and one that could have been made so much better by simply making it a bit easier."

Computer and Video Games (73%, Spectrum, February 1991)



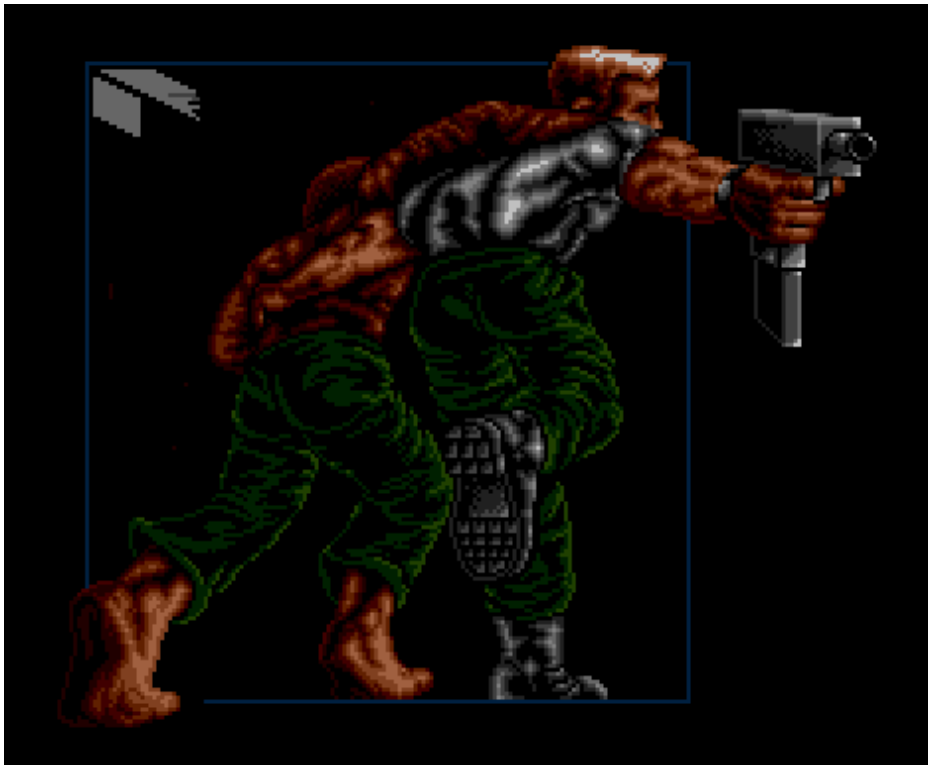
Rigging a crate can be a hit or miss affair too, obliging us to pather back and forth until the dynamite appears in its

rightful place. You can easily pass by without arming one and have to double back to make sure. So keep your wits about you, this is serious. I don't suppose Shaheed plans to use those missiles for paperweights.

> "Whoops! Guess who made their game too difficult? There's no problem with a hard-to-beat game, but this Ocean offering's just plain awkward to play. That's a shame, as there's a good game in there struggling to get out; and after the poor showing of Robocop II, I was hoping this would be the platform game to buy for the Amstrad.
>
> Still, it has its redeeming features; the animation of the hero swinging onto an overhead platform is superb, and it has that 'just one more try' quality - although sometimes frustration makes you want to get the cartridge and bung it out of the window. If you're not the most patient of players, think twice before buying."
>
> **Mean Machines (76%, Amstrad CPC, December 1990)**

Further along my little adventure, I managed to sabotage all the missile crates, only for the counter to reset to 99, barring my access through a prison gate to liberate a POW.

Traversing the whole level again to see if I'd missed something critical, I then returned to the exit to try again. This time, after a bit of pacing back and forth, the stage concluded, transitioning into a cutscene animation. Huh? It makes me wonder if these are bugs introduced by trainer/crack meddling. I should compare my version to the IPF to confirm.



Another time I deposited all but one of the bombs despite there being no silo crates remaining to tamper with. I checked the level map on Hall of Light to make sure I'd covered all the bases and definitely had. There was no way to complete the level, compelling me to skip it like a scurrilous, cheating cheater.

All together it's an intriguing effort that flirts with glimmers of innovation, yet is simultaneously hamstrung by suspect controls. Consequently offering a frustrating experience whereby wrestling with the joystick is as much of a challenge as eradicating the freedom fighters, I mean terrorists. Apparently Amiga Action concurred judging by their 80% assessment (September 1991).

> "Navy Seals is one of those games that could have been excellent, but unfortunately, is let down by a few annoying quirks. For instance, I wouldn't expect a highly trained commando to jump off a couple of crates and lose half his energy. Apart from these few faults you've effectively you've got one of Ocean's best platform romps. The animation on the main sprite cannot be faulted and the graphics throughout are of a very high standard. Overall, a competent attempt, yet very frustrating in places."

Surprisingly the misfire of a movie translated to an exceptionally well-received 8-bit game, whereas over on the 16-bit Atari and Amiga platforms opinions varied widely. Expectations were higher where the more advanced systems are concerned and gamers were beginning to cast their nets a bit wider to encompass more complex and engrossing genres. That I feel accounts for much of the dichotomy.

Amiga Navy SEALs consequently peaked at no. 57 in the sales charts in October 1991, sunk to no. 81 the following month and then dropped off the radar altogether (refer to Amiga Power magazine). Thus joining the ranks of similarly well-trodden fare, scripted to fall from grace in synchrony with the arrival of the next action movie reel. Dismissed. Fall out.